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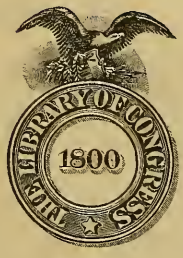

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MARSHAL FOCH

ADDRESS OF

EDGAR A. BANCROFT

AT CHICAGO'S MEETING OF WELCOME

TO

MONSIEUR LE MARÉCHAL FOCH

AT THE AUDITORIUM
NOVEMBER 5, 1921

Gift-
Dr. Frederic Bancroft-
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MARSHAL FOCH

FOUR YEARS and a half ago we met here to welcome and honor a military hero of France—Marshal Joffre, the victor of the Marne. To-night we meet to welcome and honor the military hero, not of France alone, but of the world —Marshal Foch, the victor of the War. Then we made a vow to support to the uttermost this Nation's declaration of war. To-night we pledge the supreme soldier of that war as the messenger of peace.

For more than forty years an ominous shadow had lain across the national life of France. Then suddenly in August, 1914, the long threatened march on Paris began; and for four agonizing years, France bore the brunt of the German assault. She not only gave her sons and her resources in fullest measure, but her soil was the battleground; her cities and villages, her orchards and vineyards, her factories and her mines, were ruined and destroyed, some of them in wantonness or with fiendish calculation. No other nation, not even martyred Belgium, suffered such destruction. And there were losses that no reparations can ever repair.

Through all those desperate years, France held the front line of Liberty. By the tenacity and courage of her soldiery, the military skill of her officers, and the unconquerable spirit of her people, reflected and focussed in the genius and spirit of the Supreme Commander, she made the largest contribution to final victory.

Yet there is to-day no bitterness or hatred in the heart of France toward her ancient but now conquered foe. The brave do not hate. Faithful and uncomplaining in the days of her humiliation, France cannot but be chivalrous in her day of triumph. During the long years that followed the wrongs of 1870-71, France was patient and forbearing, and kept the peace. To-day she longs for peace more than ever before. But her liberty and her security—bought at such an awful price—she must not neglect.

Is not France now entitled, has she not earned the right, to dwell in the same confident peace that England and the United States enjoy? Yet how can she relax her vigilance until her Eastern neighbor, like our own Northern neighbor of a hundred friendly years, proves herself worthy of respect and trust?

Until Germany asks France to forgive, let no one ask France to forget!

In the military principles, character and success of Marshal Foch, there is a quality that peculiarly appeals to America's ideals and imagination. Scientifically trained engineer, artillerist and strategist as he was, he yet believed, and for many years taught the officers of France, the dominance of *moral* forces in war. Faith, hope, determination, he said, are factors as real and as necessary as intelligence, study, and energy in action; "a battle is lost morally, not materially;" victory is the outcome of moral rather than material forces; and the true commander is "the *soul* of an Army." And in the War he gave frequent illustrations of this creed:

All the world remembers—and always will remember—the message of General Foch to Headquaters at a critical moment on the third day of the Battle of the Marne: "My center is giving way; my right is falling back. *The situation is excellent: I shall attack.*"

When, in October, the German hordes had swept the Belgians back to the Yser, and their heroic King Albert doubted whether his shattered army could halt the superior forces, it was General Foch who said to him: "It is vital to hold the line here. French troops will help you." And the line was held.

Then followed the terrible battle of Ypres, with its new horror and infamy of poison gas, that broke the British lines, and revealed the unflinching valor

of the Canadian volunteers. The British commander was considering an order of retreat, when he learned that General Foch was near, and immediately consulted him. General Foch strongly advised that the city be held at whatever cost. And it was held, and held gloriously, by the British until reserves came to fill their gaping ranks.

So, in the darkest hour of the defense of Verdun—the greatest battle in all history—General Foch encouraged the indomitable spirit of commander and men; and the Crown Prince, and all his vast array of artillery and shock troops, fell back defeated before "They shall not pass."

At Chateau Thierry it was Marshal Foch, Generalissimo of the Allied Armies, who turned the defensive into an offensive that started the Germans on their way back to the Rhine.

And finally, when the long night of agony and blood drew near its end, and the German lines had been retreating for three months, and terms of an armistice had been asked and given—three years ago almost to this very day—and it was urged that the terms should be unconditional surrender, it was Marshal Foch who said: "If these terms are accepted, this War is already ended; therefore, it is not worth the life of one brave soldier to gain harder terms." Like the great Silent Commander of Victory in our

Civil War, Marshal Foch in the moment of triumph thought only of Peace.

It is a part of the fine quality of his leadership that he has heart. In all his responsibilities and fame, he has never forgotten the friends of his little native village in the Pyrenees, or the troubles and anxieties of the young officer, or the common soldier. And somehow our American boys in France, though many of them never saw him, knew this, and responded to his human appeal with an added dash and bravery which all the world called superb. That is why there is so much warmth in the welcome of the overseas men. Some of them know that they are here because he stopped the War as soon as he could. Yet, when they were in France, their sense of his leadership only made them more forgetful of self, more ready to fight, to suffer, and to die under his command.

Therefore, the welcome of the men of the American Legion means most, and is most grateful, to their old Commander. Already he has received it in very moving and dramatic form. And it awaits him wherever he may go in our country.

This meeting, representative of all the people of our State and City, expresses to Marshal Foch the pride every American has in his triumph, the gratitude every American feels for his commanding service in hastening the end. It expresses also a deeper, ten-

derer feeling in many hearts, that he was the leader of a Cause sanctified to them by the loss of those most dear. These mothers and wives may not be in the throngs that acclaim his coming, but they welcome him none the less with proud tears. If they bring no new pledge to France, their reason is that spoken by Theodore Roosevelt: "I have already given to France my best."

Every American heart that suffered any anxiety of war, and every thoughtful and humane citizen will welcome, and will wish to aid, this Warrior-Hero in his pilgrimage of peace.

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